

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, February 14, 2000

Present: June Bailey, James Johnston, Joe McLeland, M.S. Mitchell, Leon Robinson, and William Sanders

Absent: Andy Schlapp

Also Present: Kirk Zoellner, Finance Department; Doug Kupper and Maryann Crockett (Staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the January 10, 2000, regular meeting were reviewed. Mitchell noted a typographical error in the fourth paragraph of the second page. The minutes were approved as corrected.

1. **Where do we go from here?** President Mitchell requested that each board member provide a list of projects they feel the Board should be working on and how the board should be planning for the future. Board members provided the following input:

June Bailey

- Suggested a tour of various park facilities for new board members.
 - Mentioned several projects including the Sherwood Glen Neighborhood Association's matching playground equipment project at the Law Enforcement Training Center. She said although the City was leasing the site from USD #259, the Park Department has agreed to a matching project with the neighborhood association to provide playground equipment, landscaping, and other park amenities. She mentioned Wildwood Park located at 27th and Richmond Avenue, which was another location currently being leased by the Park Department from USD #259 on a ten-year lease agreement. She said although some park improvements such as a walking path had been provided, the surrounding neighborhood was interested in further development. She said since the City did not own the land she did not know if they would consider further development; but as far as she was concerned the City should attempt to purchase the site, considering the amount of funds that have already been expended at the park. She also mentioned the possibility of the City developing a park at the old Greiffenstein school site. She explained that the school had been severely damaged last year during the tornado and that it was scheduled to be demolished. She said there was a need for additional park areas in south Wichita. She further indicated that the School Board was withholding decisions on land issues pending the outcome of the bond issue in April.
 - Asked for a status report on the Grove Park Project.
 - Would like to see the Summer of Discovery Program expanded.
- ❖ Director Kupper briefly mentioned the ratios of children to staff and the difficulty finding qualified staff.

- Said she would like to see the City work closer and partner more with neighborhood groups to see if the neighborhoods would be willing to take on more projects. She said she would also like to see more recognition of programs at a national level as a way to help generate increased funding. She commented that she felt Wichita Independent Neighborhoods (WIN) was a way to make people more aware of what is happening within the park system.
 - Requested status on the facility study report. She said she would like to see what has been accomplished versus what the board recommended.
 - Requested status on projects such as the Northeast Softball/Soccer Complex, South Lakes Sports Complex and Grove Park.
 - Requested status on the hiring of a Recreation Director and Maintenance Supervisor.
- ❖ Director Kupper stated that staff was reviewing the Recreation Director applicant resumes and that they hoped to have a decision by April. He said the Maintenance Supervisor position has been put on hold pending the outcome of a possible consolidation plan that he and key staff were developing for presentation to the City Manager. He briefly reviewed maintenance issues discussed such as right-of-way, which he felt directly affected citizen's first impressions of parks and recreation centers. He commented that 75% of the general public drive past parks and that beautification of the City of Wichita should be a top priority. He said the City needs to improve maintenance of park facilities and common areas. He concluded by stating that he wanted to congratulate staff that have not only survived the last year but pulled together and made progress. He said he felt morale within the department was good.

James Johnston

- Asked for clarification on touring park facilities. He indicated he would be unavailable for that activity during the week.
 - Requested that the fence at MacDonald Golf Course along 13th Street be replaced.
- ❖ Director Kupper commented that staff was working on funding for a new fence. He briefly mentioned that golf courses were under the direction of the Finance Department until after the Auburn Hills course comes on line.
- Requested that the electrical circuitry boxes at McAdams tennis courts be painted. He also asked that the rusted out "rules" signs be removed.

William Sanders

- Commented that he liked the idea of touring park facilities and that his goal this year was to be a better board member than he was last year.

Leon Robinson

- Said he liked the idea of a tour of park facilities.
- Agreed that Greiffenstein would make an ideal park location.

Joe McLeland

- Said he liked the idea of a park tour and suggested that Saturday and Sunday would be good days for board members to visit with park users.

- ❖ Director Kupper explained that recreation center programming such as before and after school programs, aerobics and other classes occur Monday through Friday. He said recreation centers were only open on weekends for rentals. He added that athletic facilities were used on weekends.
- Mentioned the possible acquisition of approximately 1.53 acres at University and Maybelle (near Tyler and Maple) from Mennonite Housing for development of a neighborhood park. He explained that Mennonite Housing was developing part of the lot as an independent living center. He commented that the Park Landscape Architect had presented a tentative site plan for board member review. He said he would like a decision on the acquisition.
- Commented on the need for additional bicycle trails and the limited access to West Wichita due to the Big Ditch. He said he thought the board should be involved in the proposed 13th Street overpass project and requested a presentation on future trail plans.
- Requested an anticipated completion date on the Lincoln Park water feature project. He said his wife runs the Harry Street LatchKey Program and that they utilized the pool at Lincoln Park.
- Requested information on the Northwest sewer facility and a presentation on the plans for the park to be built around the site.
- ❖ Director Kupper mentioned that staff had reviewed the plans, which included wetlands, and natural areas that would provide opportunities for environmental education at the park. He added that staff has also been in contact with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks regarding the possibility of establishing fisheries at the site.

M.S. Mitchell

- Commented that according to the last three park surveys, park security and maintenance were the most important issues to the public. He said part of the reason for the facility study was to get a handle on facility maintenance. He said he thought the board should use the facility study to prioritize a list of facility repairs and upgrades for consideration by the City Council.
 - Stated that he was less than happy about park facilities being maintained by personnel from another department.
 - ❖ Director Kupper explained that Public Works provided recreation center custodial staff and other building repair and maintenance.
- Mitchell said he was not sure that was the best arrangement and wanted to make sure that repairs were being completed in a timely manner. He said nothing discourages the public more than “run down” public facilities.
- Requested that the Board discuss the status of Grove Park at next month’s meeting. He requested that board members make contact with project volunteers and other organizations that had previously committed goods or services to the project.
 - ❖ Director Kupper stated that the Park Landscape Architect, Larry Hoetmer, would be available in February to review the latest site plan.

Director Kupper said he felt that the board members represented a lot of history and that they realized what the City and Park Department needed to be doing to plan for the future of the City

park system. He said he did not want to take up board member's time on mundane, day-to-day administrative and operational activities. He said he believes the Board needs to concentrate on what needs to be provided both in terms of parkland and recreational opportunities into the next century. He said the city was growing to the West and South and that the Board needed to provide input on what types of recreational opportunities need to be made available in those areas. He said staff needed board member input on such items as evaluation of current facilities and natural areas and development of additional recreational opportunities.

Director Kupper said he would like to see the Board and Park Alliance work in tandem toward mutual goals and generate their own fund raising opportunities for various park programs and projects not covered in the Park Department budget. In response to a question from Johnston, Kupper briefly explained that the Park Alliance was a non-profit organization that held fundraisers and sponsored a variety of events to raise monies for parks and park programs. He said the Alliance can be a good source for volunteers as well.

OFF THE AGENDA ITEM

1. June Bailey reported that she had been contacted by Wendell Turner regarding a possible land donation at Wellington Place and 25th or 27th Street. Mitchell mentioned work on the bridge across the canal at 25th Street.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk